DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 917 PS 021 957

AUTHOR Kagan, Sharon L.
TITLE Leadership Training for Collaboration. Draft.
PUB DATE 14 Oct 93
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Regional Early Childhood Forum (October 3, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; Cooperation; *Early Childhood Education; Instructional Leadership; Instructional Systems; Leadership Responsibility; *Leadership Styles; *Leadership Training; *Participative Decision Making; *Partnerships in Education; Preschool Teachers; Systems Approach

ABSTRACT

Based in part on a 1992 study of 72 United States early care collaborations and leaders, this paper explores conventional understandings of leadership, reviews the leadership literature, and goes on to compare and discuss collaborative leadership in detail. The paper notes that collaborative leadership stresses the relatedness of systems wherein for an individual to succeed, others must also succeed. It draws upon systems theory and integrated interactive services among agencies and disciplines. Whereas earlier and current models stress charismatic hero leaders (who rise to the top--emphasizing their greater power and the presumed lesser power and abilities of those who did it), the paper concurs with Peter Senge's view of leadership requirements for organizations in the 1990s. It calls for leaders who are "designers, stewards, and teachers." Emphasis is on collective ideas of governance, collective values and purpose, with leaders structuring environments, conveying purpose but preserving flexibility, enabling others to be more insightful, and empowering others. The paper suggests that some of the most promising systems integration work in the United States today is happening in early child care and education. The recent leadership study on which this paper is based focused on dimensions of leadership, specifically identifying, implementing and sharing leadership. These aspects are discussed in detail. Contains 12 references. (ET)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 376 917

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Third Regional Early Childhood Forum

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR COLLABORATION

****Draft 10/14/93****

Sharon L. Kagan, Ed.D.
Yale University
October, 1993

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sharon L. Kagan
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Last week's New York Times Magazine section had a special feature on "Little Big People." On the cover were young children, dressed and figuring the overly-sophisticated postures of adults many years their seniors. The cover line read, "They're precious, even out of control, and their affluent parents have themselves to blame" (Franks, 1993). The article talked about how, in trying to compensate for their own lives, yuppie parents have indulged their children, with considerable consequence. One story was about four-year-old Joshua. Actually, it was about Joshua's mother who, as a child, loved to paint but felt her parents never recognized her work. To compensate for this lack of recognition, Joshua's mother not only hung her son's paintings on the proverbial refrigerator, but throughout the house. One day, little Joshua quizzically said, "Mom, what do you think this is, the Metropolitan Museum of Joshua?"

PS 021952

I cite this story because I think when it comes to leadership, many of us feel a bit like Joshua--saturated with the good intentions of those who have come before, but realizing that

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

their strategies may not work for us. Essentially, the bottom line of my talk is that conventional ideas of leadership developed in one era and in the corporate context do not really fit what we as early care and education collaborators are trying to do today. My goal in the time I have with you is first to discuss the major ideas of leadership that have shaped conventional thinking; second, to share with you why they do and do not fit today's collaborative ethos. Third, I will share some stunning examples of effective collaborative leadership in early childhood education; and fourth, I will conclude with some specific recommendations for how we go about achieving leadership appropriate today's emphasis on collaboration.

I. THE NATIONAL AND HISTORICAL "TAKE" ON LEADERSHIP

Those of us in this room, along with noted scholars (Bass, 1990), recognize that the study of history is the study of leadership--fundamentally, all human social events can be understood as the result of actions taken by leaders (Starratt, 1993). We understand institutional and social reform by understanding the leaders who drove that reform. But, as Machiavelli noted in The Prince, "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." In short, it is important to study leadership because through it we better understand relationships of power, of change, and of the construction and reconstruction of social

order. However, we must do so recognizing the difficulties that studying and implementing leadership entail.

As I have reviewed the literature on leadership, it appears to fall into three categories: (1) literature on what leaders do; (2) literature on the cultures in which they work; and (3) more recently, literature on who the leaders are.

The first category, by far the largest and also the oldest, focuses on what leaders do; on how leaders approach tasks. This category includes the familiar theory x and theory notions. Leaders assess how they spend their time, with heavy emphasis on time management. Leaders assess whether they are more task- or more people-oriented. And leadership styles--directive or participatory--are examined. Much of this early work seeks to dichotomize leadership styles and to clearly distinguish management from leadership. This domain is well summed up by the quote, "Leaders do the right thing; Managers do things right" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Or by the quote, "Managers focus on the process: leaders on the product" (Lynch, 1993, p.7). So be it for the first category--what leaders do.

The second category stresses the nature of the work culture and how that affects and is affected by leadership. Important research along these lines has been done by Deal and Kennedy (1982), who in describing the culture of organizations, use words like heroes, rituals, and ceremonies. They claim that it is the deeper patterns of organizational life--not the styles of leaders per se--that make up organizational tapestries. In this view,

leaders devote themselves to understanding the essential values of the culture and to promoting those values. This approach to leadership is related to the idea of situational leadership which suggests that leadership needs vary dramatically by the situation, so that what will work in one context is different from what will work in another. These "contingency" theories of leadership focus on matching leadership styles with the context to achieve changes. Inherent in this construct is the belief that leadership and the culture of the organization are never constant, demanding ongoing assessment and realignment. What worked in January may no longer be effective in June. So category two focuses on the culture of the organization and situational leadership.

The last category focuses on the personal traits that leaders possess. Though many many authors write about leadership traits--charisma, energy, tact--the best work I found was by Koestenbaum (1991) in his volume, Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness. Koestenbaum suggests that leaders express greatness in four personal ways: vision; reality; ethics; and courage. By vision, he means that leaders always see the larger perspective, thinking big and new. Visioning in this sense is not a noun, but a verb. It is not what one thinks, but how one thinks; it is the process, not the content, that matters. Vision means moving away from micro-management and allowing oneself the space to be creative. Great leadership is marked by a second characteristic: reality, the art of responding to the facts. Grounding oneself

in realism means having no illusions, and understanding and coping with organizational and personal foibles. Being in touch with reality also requires that leaders understand their own ideals, values, feelings and attitudes; that they understand themselves. Ethics is the third characteristic. Great leaders are always impeccably ethical; they are sensitive to people, and are conscious not only of their own integrity, but also that of others. Finally, all leaders have courage--that is, leaders claim the power to initiate, act, and take risks. Leaders have the courage to exhibit personal autonomy and independence of thought. Koestenbaum configures the four traits into a leadership diamond, and uses the diamond as a means of assessing leadership states. Everybody's diamond will be different, with some of us being more brilliant in one domain than in another.

This is hardly a thorough treatment of leadership literature, but it does convey the broad changes in thinking that have characterized leadership writing. Simply stated, the focus at first seemed to be on the skills of individuals who were leaders, delineating distinct categories for leaders and managers. The second wave of work understood that leaders behaved in the context of organizations with histories and cultures predating them. So understanding organizational history and culture, and working to fashion it in accordance with leaders' values characterized a second line of thinking on leadership. Finally, what was latent all along became explicit--that leadership is highly personal. In short, the function of

leadership and the leader are interactive. Leadership cannot be understood in isolation of the leader's personal characteristics--vision, reality, ethics, etc.

II. WHY DOES THIS FIT? WHY DOES IT NOT FIT?

If during the above discussion you felt tinges of familiarity, you were justified; if you felt a vague sense of incompleteness, you were also justified. What I have just presented represents the fundamental bedrock of leadership theory. Much of it is actually very useful and very applicable to our work in individual organizations.

But the literature makes several critical assumptions that do not seem to fit with our collaborative work. First, the literature assumes leadership by a sole figure--the CEO of the corporation, the President of the organization. Rooted in myth, there has always been the archetypal hero who is either a founder or a leader of a journey. Indeed, the original word "Laedare" meant one who leads people on a journey. The solitary "hero" manages to save the group and to propel it to new heights. Such conceptualizations ignore constructs of multiple, shared, or joint leadership quite common in collaborations.

A second related assumption in the literature is that what is appropriate for the leader of a single large organization will also hold true for the leader of multiple organizations. Indeed, because so much of the leadership literature was generated by and for corporate America, much of it is primarily directed to the

leadership of sole-purpose organizations. Even today when corporations talk about collaboration, they most often mean collaboration within the organization itself: marketing and production should collaborate. Rarely, unlike us, do they talk about collaboration across sectors, companies, or programs. This limited focus of collaboration literature fails to account for the contradictions that collaborations impose--notably, simultaneous fidelity to one's primary institution and fidelity to the collaboration.

A third assumption is that leadership emerges from a competitive, not a collaborative context. If we think about it, work on leadership was launched from the corporate sector where competition is the norm. Indeed, according to the principles of capitalism, competition is regarded as healthy. We, on the other hand, recognize that competition can be unhealthy. When we compete, it is for kids, space, and staff, and it reflects how imperfect our system is. The point is that when one discusses leadership in a competitive context, it is unlikely to be the same as leadership in a collaborative context. We simply cannot regard conventional leadership as the peg that will automatically fit the hole we are trying to fill. Essentially, we are dealing with a square peg--a competitive understanding of leadership--that we are trying to fit into a round hole--a collaborative context.

III. COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Well, if old notions of leadership don't fit us, what does? More akin to leadership in collaborations is thinking about systems theory and integrated services that conceptualizes work across agencies and disciplines. Systems thinking sees that unless all the parts of an entity work together, the entire entity is dysfunctional. It's like the body; if the circulatory system isn't looking, the patient--even if all other systems (digestive, reproductive) are okay--will be ill. Peter Senge's book, The Fifth Discipline (1990), provides a good example of leadership in systems. Indeed, the front flap of the volume begins with a quote from Fortune: "Forget your old, tired ideas about leadership. The most successful organization of the 1990s will be something called a learning organization." Senge offers as the fifth discipline the skill of thinking systemically. He stresses the inter-relatedness of systems, suggesting that in order for any single individual to succeed, others must succeed as well. According to Senge, current structures work against systemic goals, aggrandizing the charismatic leaders--the heros who rise to the top--and preserving "assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change" (Senge, 1990, p. 340). Senge believes that a paradigm shift needs to take place in order for organizations to perpetuate themselves, and calls for new leaders who are designers, stewards, and teachers. In specifying leaders as designers, he stresses the importance of designing as a

process that forces us to think about collective ideas of governance, values, purpose, and vision. Senge sees the designer as the architect of a learning environment that makes perpetual growth possible. Leaders must also be stewards, able to convey their "purpose story," without being so rigid as to prevent flexibility in the tale's interpretation. Finally, and of little surprise to anyone in this room, leaders must be teachers who help others to be more insightful and empowered.

Senge has it right, I think, in that he recognizes that we are at the cusp of a major shift in doing business; that models from the corporate world aren't suitable in all contexts. Taking this premise one step further, I would like to suggest that we in the early childhood field have some wonderful examples of systems thinking and the new leadership it requires. In fact, the most promising systems integration work in the United States is happening in early care and education. I know this because recently, colleagues and I completed a study entitled, Collaboration: Cornerstone of an Early Childhood System (1992), in which we looked carefully at 72 early care collaborations and collaborative leaders throughout the nation and visited eight that we studied in depth. We focused on several dimensions of leadership, three of which I will discuss today: (1) identifying leadership; (2) implementing leadership; and (3) sharing leadership.

(1) Identifying Leadership

Identifying collaborative leadership is not as easy as

it appears. Indeed, many collaborations are headed by the person who carries the official "leadership title"--the titular leader. But just as often, leadership rests with an individual or individuals not carrying any official leadership title, whose power and authority seem to eclipse that of the elected or appointed chair--the titular leader. In two of the eight collaborations visited the titular leader was the real leader. At the other six sites, the titular leader was not the real leader; leadership was more diffuse, and the identity of the real leader was slightly more difficult to ascertain.

(2) Implementing Leadership

Once we were able to identify collaborative leadership, we turned our focus to leadership style. Two distinct styles were found at the eight collaboration sites: facilitative and directive. Leaders with a facilitative style depend upon consensus-building and encourage whole-collaboration involvement in planning and decision-making. As Melaville & Blank (1991) point out, such leaders need to be inclusionary, making all members party to key decisions. Directive leaders, on the other hand, assume primary authority for the collaboration's mission. While they might welcome input, final decisions rest with them. We observed no cases of laissez-faire leadership styles, purported to be less effective than either facilitative or directive styles. Interestingly, we saw that leadership style is not the same as personality. Directive leaders are not universally aggressive, and facilitative leaders are not always

gentle. Indeed, one directive leader was a quiet and mild person rather than a firebrand, while the facilitative leader was widely known as forthright, aggressive, and strong.

Despite differences in leadership style, we noted that leaders in this study shared some powerful characteristics. First, they all understood power and knew how to use it. In each case, the leaders used their skill to gain popularity for their cause and their vision. Directive leaders were more overt about their visions and strategies and were more entrepreneurial in "selling" their vision. Facilitative leaders were more subtle and, some might suggest, more consciously manipulative of others. They were agile networkers, studying their communities and the inherent leadership patterns. They knew which buttons to press, and when. Finally, both directive and facilitative leaders carried out dual, and sometimes contradictory, roles of visionary and mediator.

(3) Sharing Leadership

Though identifying leadership and specifying styles are helpful, these activities tell only a fraction of the leadership story. Much of that story has to do with the attempt of collaborations to institute shared leadership. We found that a polarized understanding of leadership sharing--it either exists or it doesn't--is too simplistic an approach. In reality, the degree and quality of shared leadership differs drastically in each collaboration. Much leadership sharing is so subtle and unofficial that it is not contained not in any formal statement,

nor widely recognized by collaborators.

We discovered that there is a continuum of leadership sharing with sole leadership at one end, dual leadership next, supported leadership next, and shared leadership at the other end. Sole leadership, as its name suggests, occurs when one person leads the collaboration, without input or sharing from any other person or group. Dual leadership involves leadership sharing between two recognized leaders. Supported leadership exists when there is a recognized individual leader who receives advice, input, guidance, and endorsement from multiple other sources in the collaboration. Finally, shared leadership occurs when the leadership is diffused throughout the collaboration, becoming a holistic property shared to some degree by all persons and groups involved in the collaboration. Though one person or group may rise to prominence in a given situation, such prominence is temporary and non-threatening to leadership distribution.

While placement of leadership along a continuum may suggest that one form is better than another, the data show that there are benefits and drawbacks to each pattern of leadership. For example, in the instance of sole and dual leadership--the kind detailed in much of the conventional literature discussed earlier--the drawbacks seem to outweigh the benefits. Under sole and dual leadership, decisions are made quickly, and there is no dispute about "who to go to" to ascertain policies or procedures. However, drawbacks emerge in the domains of both process and

outcomes. Other members of the collaborative report being "left out." They have little sense of ownership of the collaboration and often experience negative emotions toward the collaboration's leader or leaders. Furthermore, such collaborations frequently fail to maintain inclusive relationships with the groups they represent, thus alienating their constituencies and perpetuating divisiveness. In reality, many sole and dual leaders sacrifice the benefits of the collaboration.

Supported and shared leadership patterns present the opposite picture. In soliciting input from the constituencies represented in the collaboration, these types of leadership strengthen the collaborative process by enhancing collaborative relationships. Just as importantly, supported and shared leadership allow access to the community through interested and committed members. Drawbacks to supported and shared leadership include arduous and lengthy decision-making caused by an atmosphere in which all opinions are accorded equal importance. However, in both allowing conflicts and eventually resolving them, members' relationships and problem-solving skills are strengthened, and decisions, once reached, are strongly endorsed by those who helped formulate them. Our finding, echoing the literature on collaboration, is that supported and shared leadership are preferable.

The sharing of leadership has been discussed by many, but few have articulated it as well as Robert Kelley (1991) in his potent work, The Power of Followership. Kelley's thesis, so

appropriate for the shared leadership we are trying to create, talks about the high cost of leader worship, arguing that the myth of the single leader as omnipotent strips people of their power, encourages competition, and relegates non-leaders to the losers category. So negative is the concept of followership in this nation, that when Kelley was writing his book, he had trouble getting people agree to be interviewed; no one wanted to be considered a follower.

Kelley debunks the negativism associated with followership, suggesting that we are all followers AND leaders. He says that part of the art of survival in the new era involves learning to be both an effective leader and an effective follower and to know when it is appropriate to be each. Exemplary followers know how to think critically and independently and possess the "courageous conscience" necessary to stand up to leaders in unethical situations. Good followers participate actively and seek to use their skills for the benefit of the organization. They have strong organizational abilities, understand the process of give-and-take, and work effectively as team members. Amazingly, Kelley's steps to be a good follower parallel remarkably the qualities of the leadership diamond discussed earlier--namely courage, understanding of facts and realities, and maintenance of high ethical standards.

In sum, what has become apparent from analytic and field work is that conventional ideas about leadership are changing fast. Gone are the days when the leader was the hero; they have

been replaced by constructs of leaders as hero-makers. New leaders share roles, risks, and rewards. They know when and how to lead and when and how to follow.

IV. COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES; HOW DO WE GET IT?

(1) Nurture and Train for Followership/Collaborative Leadership

Read Kelley's book, and support leaders who are collaborative in their dealings with others. Sometimes setting up a structure to foster collaborative leadership helps. In some early childhood collaborations, leadership is shared among parents and staff--a wonderful technique for engaging parents and giving them a voice and for helping us learn more about them, their children, and their expectations for both. In other communities, the leadership of the collaboration is designed so that it rotates from one agency to another after a specified period--usually a year. In still other cases, behind the scenes leadership or "god-fathership" is openly acknowledged and nurtured. In short, we need to understand that new leadership qualities and structures are absolute requisites for collaborative work and must seek them out and train for them. Corporations are now providing leadership training for many employees, not just for the leaders. Indeed, there are good techniques that business uses, some in concert with universities, some via private training institutions that should be employed. Perhaps most important and useful is the wonderful training and

support offered by NCREL.

(2) Identify the Collaboration's Niche

Today, as collaboration is catching on, we are finding that communities are inundated with multiple collaborations. All well-intentioned, these efforts need to be carefully planned, with overlaps and gaps identified for all. It is, for example, not at all uncommon for one group to form a collaboration, picking up the agenda of a pre-existing group without even realizing that it may be displacing the original collaboration. Needless to say, this causes hard feelings and makes the challenge of leadership, however skilled the leader, untenable. Part of being leader is to ferret out the competition and to recognize that inter-collaboration is necessary.

(3) Seek High Urgent/High Payoff Strategies

Covey (1990) delineates an approach to task assessment that is important for collaborative leaders to understand and to share openly with colleagues. He categorizes activities into four types: (1) Tasks that are urgent and have high payoff; (2) tasks that are not urgent but have high payoff; (3) tasks that are urgent but have low payoff; and (4) tasks that are not urgent and have low payoff. We all would say that the fourth type of activity should be a low priority. That's clear. What is less clear is how the other categories stack up. Think back to Friday, and of the first two things you did. Write them down. Now think about all you had to do. Were these category 1, 2, 3, or 4? I would bet that one of those two initial activities was a

type 3 effort--urgent but low payoff. Indeed, most collaborations end up working at type 3 activities when to truly move the agenda, we need as individuals and as effective collaborators to be working at types 1 and 2---those with high payoff for the collaboration. For collaborations--and incidentally for individuals--a focus on low payoff activities can no longer be tolerated in a time-driven society. We need to focus on that which is urgent and that which has high organizational payoff.

(4) Consider Providing Rewards/Affirmations Routinely

For those of us who have been socialized in the non-profit sector, the concept of incentives and rewards is less overt than it is in business and industry where performance is routinely evaluated by reward and where incentives are routinely used to induce behavioral change. I am not suggesting that collaborations need to be driven by a system of monetary rewards--far from it. But I am saying that successful collaborative leaders understand how to motivate people and use subtle but meaningful rewards. The first kind of reward collaborations must accord is recognition. Recognition may be given in small ways--a call to say thank you, telling people they did a good job, soliciting opinions honestly, acknowledging participation. A corollary to recognition is that it must be honest and it must be frequent. By looking for the good, and by recognizing it, it will happen more frequently. The rule of rewards is to pay attention to whatever it is we want more of. Typically, in

collaborations we do the opposite--we focus on what we don't want.

V. A FEW ENDING THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

When Linda invited me to talk about collaboration, I was thrilled; first, because you all are doing such good work and are on the cutting edge of leadership efforts in our nation. Second, because I regarded it as a real challenge. At one point in my life I was required to complete advanced administrator's coursework to lead a Head Start program that was a delegate to the Board of Education. Weekly, I sat through classes where we role-played, telephone-teamed, and did all these seemingly inane exercises. I disliked them so much because they were in the evenings when I was exhausted, and also because they seemed so irrelevant. While at night they were trying to show me the theoretical keys to leadership, I actually spent my days fetching out real keys that some child had thrown into the toilet. It all felt worlds apart; theory seemed irrelevant to reality.

What I have tried to suggest today is not so much that theory is irrelevant, but that--as with Joshua--we are moving beyond yesterday's strategies. We are creating leadership according to a new context, trying to make it relevant to our reality. And I am confident that given what is going on in early childhood, we can succeed. I believe we are on the cutting edge of collaborative leadership.

John Richardson said it well:

> When it comes to the future,
> there are three kinds of people:
> Those who let it happen,
> those who make it happen,
> And those who wonder what happened.

We are clearly in the second category--recognizing the new collaborative reality and making leadership happen.

REFERENCES

Bass, B. M. (1990). The Handbook of leadership. New York: The Free Press.

Bennis, W. G., & Nanus, B. (1985). Leaders: Strategies for taking charge. New York: Harper & Row.

Covey, S. R. (1990). The seven habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic. New York: Fireside.

Deal, T., & Kennedy, A. (1982). Corporate cultures. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Franks, L. (1993, October 10). Little big people. The New York Times Magazine, pp. 28-34.

Kagan, S. L., Rivera, A. M., Brigham, N., & Rosenblum, S. (1992). Collaboration: Cornerstone of an early childhood system. New Haven, CT: The Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

Kelley, R. (1991). The power of followership: How to create leaders people want to follow and followers who lead themselves. New York: Doubleday.

Koestenbaum, P. (1991). Leadership: The inner side of greatness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Lynch, R. (1993). Lead! How public and nonprofit managers can bring out the best in themselves and their organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Melaville, A., & Blank, M. (1991). What it takes: Structuring interagency partnerships to connect children and families with comprehensive services. Washington, DC: The Education and Human Services Consortium.

Senge, M. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. New York: Doubleday.

Starratt, R. J. (1993). The drama of leadership. London: The Falmer Press.